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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/766,135	01/27/2004	David F. Zhou	2128.1-6	1968

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EXAMINER

SZMAL, BRIAN SCOTT

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3736

DATE MAILED: 09/17/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/766,135

Applicant(s)

ZHOU ET AL.

Examiner

Brian Szmaj

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-33 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-33 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

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Double Patenting

1. A rejection based on double patenting of the "same invention" type finds its support in the language of 35 U.S.C. 101 which states that "whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process ... may obtain a patent therefor ..." (Emphasis added). Thus, the term "same invention," in this context, means an invention drawn to identical subject matter. See *Miller v. Eagle Mfg. Co.*, 151 U.S. 186 (1894); *In re Ockert*, 245 F.2d 467, 114 USPQ 330 (CCPA 1957); and *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970).

A statutory type (35 U.S.C. 101) double patenting rejection can be overcome by canceling or amending the conflicting claims so they are no longer coextensive in scope. The filing of a terminal disclaimer cannot overcome a double patenting rejection based upon 35 U.S.C. 101.

2. Claims 1-8, 10, 11 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 as claiming the same invention as that of claims 1-10 and 13 of prior U.S. Patent No. 6,780,160 B2.

This is a double patenting rejection.

3. Claims 1-8, 10-20, 29-31 and 33 are provisionally rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 as claiming the same invention as that of claims 1-23 of copending Application No.

10/407,496. This is a provisional double patenting rejection since the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

4. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

5. Claims 12 and 13 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 11 and 12 of U.S. Patent No. 6,780,160 B2. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the current claim claims a "transport capsule" instead of a "mailing capsule" of '160. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to recognize that "mailing" is a form of "transport".

6. Claims 9, 21-28 and 32 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1 and 2 of U.S. Patent No. 6,780,160 B2 in view of Urata et al (EP 0 638 803 A1). Zhou et al ('160) discloses the use of a specimen collection apparatus but fail to disclose the open end of the vessel and the cover having cooperating screw threads; the sealed access port is releasably sealed by a plug; the plug is threaded to releasably engage the first closed end having cooperating threads; the plug comprises a machine graspable outer surface; the graspable outer surface comprises a faceted surface; and a means for allowing excess collected matter to dry.

Urata et al discloses a feces pick-up container for transportation and further disclose the open end of the vessel and the cover having cooperating screw threads; the sealed access port is releasably sealed by a plug; the plug is threaded to releasably engage the first closed end having cooperating threads; the plug comprises a machine graspable outer surface; the graspable outer surface comprises a faceted surface; and a means for allowing excess collected matter to dry. See Page 11, lines 38-46; and Figures 1 and 2.

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Since both Zhou et al and Urata et al disclose means for collecting fecal samples, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the apparatus of Zhou et al to include the vessel and the cover having cooperating screw threads as well as a releasable plug, as per the teachings of Urata et al, since it is well known in the art to provide various means of sealing a sample container. It also would have been a matter of obvious design choice to a person of ordinary skill in the art to provide a vessel with a tapered outer surface, wherein the tapered outer surface is oriented to create a first axially medial surface portion having a narrower axial cross-section than a second axially medial surface portion, wherein the second axially medial surface portion is located closer to the first closed end than the first axially medial portion, and the tapered outer surface has a substantially frusto-conical shape, because the Applicant has not disclosed that the shape of the vessel provides an advantage, is used for a particular purpose, or solves a stated problem. One of ordinary skill in the art, furthermore, would have expected the Applicant's invention to perform equally well with a cylindrical vessel as that of Urata et al because the cylindrical vessel is capable of containing a fecal sample in the same way as that of a vessel with a tapered outer surface.

Specification

7. The abstract of the disclosure is objected to because the abstract exceeds 150 words. Correction is required. See MPEP § 608.01(b).

Claim Objections

8. Claim 24 is objected to because of the following informalities: The claim refers to Claim 2 while disclosing "said machine graspable outer surface". Claim 23 provides the antecedent basis for Claim 24, and therefore Claim 24 should refer to Claim 23 instead of Claim 2. Appropriate correction is required.


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Brian Szmalec whose telephone number is (703) 308-3737. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, with second Fridays off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Max Hindenburg can be reached on (703) 308-3130. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



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